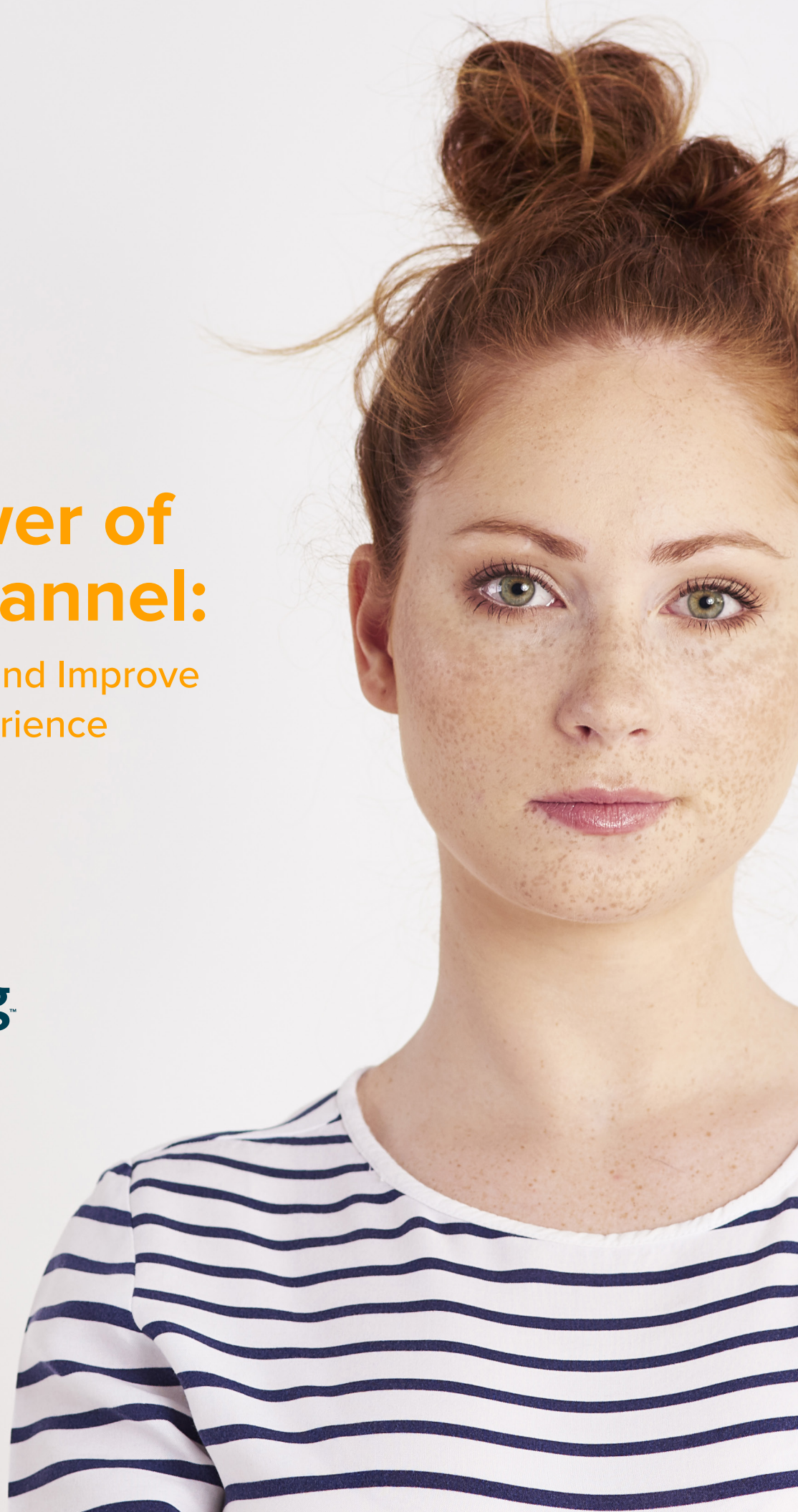


The Power of OmniChannel:

Controls Costs and Improve
the Patient Experience

WHITE PAPER



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Executive Summary

For years, the healthcare industry has been determined to optimize patient engagement. Our take: the very concept of patient engagement is flawed and inadequate to meet the challenges ahead.

The death of patient engagement—as we know it today—is just around the corner.

This will be a very good thing for patients and your organization. Traditional ideas about patient engagement have led many healthcare providers down the wrong path: seeking patients to be more engaged with caregivers. But that's looking at patient engagement through a rear view mirror.

Instead, healthcare providers need to proactively engage with patients based on the *patients' experience*—instead of trying to get patients to do what's easiest for providers. This begins by re-thinking your journey map. Organizational journey maps that start with your company's processes, structure or systems cannot lead you to a customer-centric outcome.

The distinction may seem too subtle to matter. This report should convince you otherwise. And forget about the “marketing funnel,” that time-honored idea that customers/patients follow a linear path to and through your organization. We now know that the patient experience doesn't follow a uniformly predictable pattern. We also know that customers of all types care deeply about speed and flexibility, reliability and transparency, and competent interactions including empathetic care.



“Companies seeking to keep pace with industry leaders must embark on an OmniChannel transformation—one that views touchpoints not in isolation but as part of a seamless customer journey. And since customer journeys aren't simple and linear but a series of handoffs between traditional and digital channels that can vary significantly by customer (or patient) type, an effective strategy requires an in-depth understanding of what customers truly want.” (McKinsey & Company)

All of which brings us to the importance of understanding and embracing an OmniChannel communications approach with patients. It's easy to confuse "multiple channels" with "OmniChannel," but the difference is significant. An OmniChannel approach makes movement between interaction channels seamless in accordance with patient preferences *and* their actual behavior.

And while that might sound complicated or expensive, new tools are making it easier and more cost-effective than ever. Many industries already are benefitting from an OmniChannel approach, which your organization can apply to the unique communication challenges in healthcare.

Why should you care?

The stakes have never been higher in healthcare. Costs continue to rise even as patient loyalty becomes a relic of simpler times. Patients are empowered with more freedom to shop for providers than ever before. Something as common as a billing error can spur many patients to start looking for a new provider. Need proof? In a recent national RevSpring survey nearly 60 percent of respondents said they would consider leaving their provider due to a bad billing experience.

Healthcare providers concerned with rising costs may balk at engaging with patients in ways they prefer. Many assume it will mean an increase in customer care center costs. Some dread hiring more front office staff to answer questions or help patients to understand their medical bills. And yet others assume engaging with patients on their own terms will mean the expense of creating and mailing even more communications materials, most of which will be recycled before they are read.

As you grapple with how to get more accomplished at a lower cost, patients are clamoring for streamlined, effective digital interactions that save them time while letting them know their caregivers understand their journey and have empathy for their challenges.

How do you effectively meet patients' needs while meeting your own pressing business challenges? It's not about adding channels; it's about using the *right channels*. By eliminating wasted touchpoints, you can optimize the right ones for each patient. By using channels strategically, you can afford to invest in the best technologies as you eliminate non-performing ones.

New technology is driving efficiency, and makes it possible to communicate more personally and appropriately with patients *based on their preferences*. And not only is new technology creating new communication channels, it's creating more convenient and flexible payment methods.

Things are changing in exciting ways.

Understanding the patient journey so that communications can be tailored accordingly is not only attainable, it's happening now. In the hands of the right visionary partner, you can achieve an OmniChannel approach that makes patient communications more intuitive and effective.

A good customer experience is not one that gets a customer to engage more; it's an experience that's easy for the customer. And to make that type of experience happen, you have to shift from a tactical approach to a more holistic—OmniChannel—approach.

Demystifying Automation Technology: From Fear to Efficiency

Distrust of the machine learning and artificial intelligence that drive the OmniChannel approach is rapidly diminishing. More and more industries are embracing automation in ways that make life better in astonishing and diverse ways. Consider:

Financial Services

From automated trading systems that run completely without human intervention, to improved risk management and better chatbot experiences, financial institutions around the world are investing billions into finding ways to use machine learning.

Mortgage Lending

Nearly one third of all mortgage lenders are using some form of machine learning or artificial intelligence to assist with mortgage originations and approvals.

Manufacturing

Artificial intelligence and machine learning adoption in manufacturing are predicted to eclipse robotics over the next five years. And manufacturers are learning ways to increase sustainability by using machine learning and predictive analytics that scale on cloud platforms.

Healthcare

Machine learning is helping pathologists to make quicker and more accurate diagnoses. Beyond diagnosis, machine learning is leading to more effective treatments:

- Microsoft's Project InnerEye can differentiate between healthy anatomy and tumors by using 3D radiological images.
- Pfizer is using machine learning for immune-oncology research into how the body's immune system can fight cancer.
- Concerto Health AI uses machine learning to analyze oncology data, providing insights necessary for precision medicine.

What's more, automation not only is improving patient care, but also the patient experience by making it more relevant to patients' needs and preferences. While automation might seem to take engagement away from the human experience, it provides insight that actually makes the experience *more personal and human*.

OmniChannel: Reaping the Benefits of Patient-Centered Automation

OmniChannel communication is not a fad. Healthcare is just beginning to use OmniChannel approaches to deliver the experience patients desire, but the potential to empower the next generation of healthcare providers is vast. Here are five key OmniChannel takeaways from other industries that healthcare providers need to understand now:

#1—Engagement is a metric, not a strategy

Focusing on engagement as your primary metric can lead to a myopic view of your patient. Instead, look at cross-channel communications through an OmniChannel lens, and gain a holistic view of patient activity and touchpoints across your organization.

OmniChannel Means Understanding Customers

No two patients are the same, but they can be broadly classified using their preferences and behavior. Patients can look demographically similar but behave in unique ways, particularly in their use of digital technology. Recent research into digital behavior by both RevSpring and McKinsey & Company provides insight into categories of consumer engagement:

Digital by lifestyle (23 percent). For these consumers, digital is fully integrated into their lives. They don't perceive a separation between the digital and traditional worlds—they use social media every day and tend not to watch traditional TV or read newspapers. Across our communications, we view lifestyle as an important indicator of channel preference.

Digital by choice (35 percent). Individuals who enjoy the advantages that digital brings, such as Netflix, Skype, YouTube, online check-in for travel, and online banking transactions, have options for how they engage but opt primarily for digital channels. Like lifestyle, we find past digital financial behavior is predictive of channel preference and payment.

Digital by need (25 percent). Digital is beyond the comfort zone of these consumers, who engage with digital channels only when necessary.

Offline society (17 percent). Individuals who live in the non-digital world and prefer personal contacts make up nearly one-fifth of all customers. They use bank branches, shop in brick-and-mortar stores, and typically do not use the internet.

Put another way, some 42 percent of individuals only engage digitally when they have to...or not at all. Understanding how to identify and categorize your patient journeys can improve the patient experience and eliminate wasted communications.

See the experience as a journey that you provide for your patient: how a customer started a provider relationship, then proceeded with that experience, and where the experience failed or succeeded.

#2—Experience is the strategy

Once you have the customer journey information tied together in one view, improving the overall experience becomes the strategy—independent of any particular touchpoint or channel. This is an important realization. It means many organizations must reorganize around a horizontal journey focus.

#3—Meet consumers where they are and then take them somewhere better

OmniChannel communication allows you to be predictive. It gives you a view into what constitutes a better overall customer experience. This shouldn't be confused with simply making incremental communication improvements or changing communication types. Rather, it should lead to communications that are seamless and relevant, and that enable you to consider what else you can do in the service of your patients.

#4—Deliver new dynamic experiences driven by OmniChannel technology

The B2B realm has taught us to think of consumers as moving through a linear experience, the classic marketing funnel. But through a data-driven approach, analysis of actual behavior reveals that the funnel metaphor is not accurate. A dynamic experience enables providers to use what they know about their patients to deliver what they need—where and when they need it. For example, you may need to deliver information in a different channel, through multiple channels, or to use a better (CSR) script to drive the experience.

#5—Dynamic experiences require a focus on iteration and optimization

There is no “perfect” journey. But there always are better journeys or a better way to do something. This attitude is critical because using an OmniChannel approach means you're continually working to make the patient experience better.

Let's Talk Tech

Technology is an important component of an effective digital transformation. Start by clearly understanding the goals of your digital transformation. Are you hoping to lower costs, drive business, recognize earned revenue, gain new insights, improve your patient experience—or all of the above?

Use your goals to drive decisions about what to transform within your business. Avoid the trap of transformation for its own sake. End goals must be the roadmap that guides your digital transformation.

Next, assess your current data and analysis capabilities. What questions are you asking of your data? Is your organization data rich or data poor? Similarly, does your organization utilize all available data when making decisions? What tools are being used to analyze your data? Understanding the role of data and analysis within your organization will aid your digital transformation.

The next step is to identify gaps in your view of the business and the patient. What are your financial KPIs and how do they relate to the patient? What KPIs do you utilize to understand the patient experience? Identifying these gaps will help you ask new questions of your data and devise tests to help you answer them.

With these questions in mind, it's time to investigate technologies that let you operationalize around a test-and-learn approach. These technologies should allow your team to both execute tests and analyze results. Your goal? Establishing new processes that blend your operational and analysis teams to make full use of your new technology capabilities.

Finally, evangelize your technology along with your new processes and the new knowledge gained throughout your organization. If data is the lifeblood of an organization, knowledge is its heart. A successful transformation is completed with new processes, new insights and shared knowledge—an OmniChannel approach that puts the patient at the center and a journey-centric platform that solves your communications problems while answering your most important business questions.

Parting Thoughts from RevSpring

Look for the death of patient engagement as we know it over the next few years. More importantly, help drive the demise because old school patient engagement is holding financial engagement back from the astounding results that many industries and other consumer engagement/marketing approaches are realizing. Healthcare leaders will no longer strive for engagement in siloed channels, rather they will provide better overall patient experiences through an OmniChannel approach. If your organization hopes to be among them, here are three simple guidelines for getting there:

Break Down Silos

Why? If your goal is to optimize one silo, you're optimizing the touchpoint but not the patient experience. You want patients to use the tools appropriate to them, at the right point in their journey. If you're successful at doing that, the rest will take care of itself.

Embrace Innovation

Technology helps achieve patient focus and foster healthcare engagement. The technology exists today to help providers do this.

Put Patients First; Touchpoints Should Follow

Analytics applied to patient engagement shows that the patient experience is complex. Every patient journey is different and often does not follow an expected path. At RevSpring, we're leading with new digital automation tools to understand your patient journeys at scale. These tools put a spotlight on the patient, uncovering the most important touchpoints for the patient experience. By targeting the touchpoints that matter, you can drive results by improving important communications and eliminating waste from your communication efforts.

The bottom line?

With RevSpring technology, a patient-journey focus and our experienced team, digital automation can produce transformative insights and bottom-line results for every industry—with healthcare at the top of the list. For organizations ready to engage with their patients and embrace an OmniChannel patient communications approach, powerful technology offered by RevSpring can make the transformation fast and easy.

Ready to get started?

Give RevSpring a call at 866-310-8001 or email us at learnmore@revspringinc.com.

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RevSpring leads the market in financial engagement and payment solutions that inspire patients to participate in and pay for their healthcare. The company has built the industry's most comprehensive and impactful suite of patient engagement, OmniChannel communications and payment solutions backed by behavior analysis, propensity-to-pay scoring, contextual messaging, and user experience best practices. Using proprietary data analytics to tailor the engagement from pre-service to post-service, we improve the financial experience and outcomes for providers and their patients.

Disclaimer: The contents of this resource are not intended to serve as legal or any other advice.